LCCD Public Meeting Minutes

LOCATION: Laramie County Conservation District Office
DATE: February 12, 2026
TIME: 6:00 PM

In Attendance: Jason Crowder, Casey Epler, Ann Sanchez, Jay Barry
Staff Present: Kevin Wells, Chris Vercelli, Tami Jorns, NRCS
Guests Present: Patty Wells, Sage Wells
1)PROJECT STATUS – Kevin Wells

- Nothing has changed with the project reports.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- All conservation trees have been sold this year.
- The windbreak designs are complete and there will be only 1 tree crew this year. That crew will include Dale, Chris, & Jeff. It has not been decided if there will be additional part time labor utilized.
- Kevin shared a Development Review Report for Laramie County. There were two projects that required wells to be drilled to accommodate small subdivisions and 5 new cell tower replacements.
- Development in the Natural Area has been put on hold until further discussion.

2)SUPERVISOR OVERSIGHT REPORTS

FINANCIAL REPORT – For January 2026

Checking Balance was $1,612,961.77
Total Income was $233,663.76
Total Expenses were $69,192.66
Net Ordinary Income was $1,777,432.87
Total Cash on Hand was $3,148,329.19

The district's income for January 2025 was $257,845.47. Our January income for 2026, in comparison, has declined by $24,181.71. The decrease in income is due to the decrease in mill levy income.

2)SUPERVISOR OVERSIGHT REPORTS

Supervisor Oversight Reports

- **Water –** Supervisor Casey Epler reported that there has been no recharge in the area aquifer for the past two years. He stated we need to do more for water conservation. An idea he shared for slowing water evaporation was to add medium sized balls on top of the water in stock tanks. This idea has been used successfully on some ranches in New Mexico.
- **Wildlife Range –** Supervisor Jason Crowder: Nothing to report.
- **Trees –** Supervisor Jay Barry: Nothing to report.
- **Administration –** Supervisor Ann Sanchez -Nothing to report
- **NRCS –** Tami Jorns- Ali Beltran will be joining the NRCS team. There will be a new push to do more soil testing in the NRCS programs. 85% of Laramie County is in a moderate drought, while 15% is abnormally dry. The predictions for the coming months look like equal chances for continued drought or a chance for normal precipitation.

3)APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Ann moved to approve the Minutes with the correction of the spelling of **Eolian** Corp. by Jason. Jay seconded the motion. Motion to approve the minutes passed.

4)NEW BUSINESS ACTIONS

- After a discussion about the merits of constructing a solar energy project at the district, a vote was taken to implement the project. Epler and Berry voted No; Sanchez and Cherek (proxy vote) voted Yes. The motion failed.
- The Master Gardeners are constructing a large gardening area complete with high tunnels to help citizens learn how to successfully garden in our area. They asked if the district would provide trees, fabric, and labor to protect the garden area.

Casey Epler made the motion to fund the project up to $5,000. The funding is to provide needed trees, fabric and labor to the Master Gardeners for their project and was unanimously passed by the board.

- A motion was made by Casey Epler to begin to advertise for a new financial coordinator and outreach coordinator. A 2nd was made by Ann Sanchez. After a discussion, A vote of 3 yes votes (Scott Cherek by proxy) and Jay Berry abstained. The motion passed.

5) DISCUSSION

- Selection-Interview Committee: Kevin gave each board member a folder with the applications that have been screened, their resume and recommendations. He wants to keep a consistent group of people from the district involved with the interviews. He hopes to have interviews for the Resource Specialist and the Wildlife/Range Habitat Specialist done last week in February.

- Employee Policy Manual Amendments-These proposed changes made by Manager Wells were on an updated slide he presented to the board. These changes included:

1. The evaluation period of all LCCD employees will include Goal setting MAY-June.
2. Mid-term evaluation Nov-Dec by the Manager
3. Final evaluation with board and Manager April-May to determine COLA and step increase. New employee evaluation period will be adjusted to coincide with the current schedule once the probationary period is completed.

All new employees will be subject to a ninety-day probationary period wherein the new employee will be evaluated for continued employment by the Board of Supervisors and the District Manager.

- The awards banquet has not been finalized. It was suggested that we could have it at the Archer facility and have it catered. Other ideas included the Buckle Club and the Kawanis facility in the park. It is hoped that we can have the banquet in April.

- Lots of discussion on the Meta Grant Expenses – The basic problem seems to be that the mini excavator was accepted by the district personal with no approval from the board. As it turns out, the district has no policy for board approval for grant acquisitions by the district. It was suggested that the board gets together for a retreat in the summer to write the policies that are needed. Kevin recognizes the problem.

6) ADJOURNMENT

Ann Sanchez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Jay Berry. Motion passed unanimously.

Time of Adjournment: 9:00 PM

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2026 @ 6:00 PM

Jason Crowder, Chair

Scott Chelek, Secretary

(All board meetings are audio recorded)